Call for Papers

Studying the Language of Young Learners: Methodological Advances and Challenges

– Second Workshop on Studying the Language of Young Learners –
Thursday, July 16th & Friday, July 17th, 2026

University of Bonn, Germany, Convenors: Anna Rosen (University of Freiburg), Robert Fuchs (University of Bonn) & Valentin Werner (University of Bamberg), linked to the project Young German Learner English

Research on young second language (L2) learners, as well as young learner (inter-)language specifically, has gained increasing attention in recent years, driven by calls for greater diversity and representativeness in both Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Learner Corpus Research (LCR). Although a growing number of learner corpora are available (Fernández & Davis, 2021), corpora representing young learner language, broadly defined, remain comparatively rare. While empirical findings from young learners are of exceptional theoretical and applied importance, they also raise distinct methodological challenges at every stage of the research process, from study design and data elicitation to annotation, analysis, and interpretation (Granger, 2015; Myles, 2015, 2021; Tracy-Ventura & Paquot, 2021).

This workshop focuses explicitly on these **methodological issues**. It is intended as an interdisciplinary forum for researchers working with young learner populations, typically situated in institutional (primary or secondary school) contexts, to exchange insights, innovations, and best practices that advance the methodological foundations of our field (Gilquin, 2015, 2021; Paquot & Plonsky, 2017).

We invite single- or multiple-authored papers that address **methodological aspects** of research on young learner language, including but not limited to:

- **Corpus design and compilation** for young learner data (ethical considerations, sampling, metadata, longitudinal vs. cross-sectional designs) (Gilquin, 2015; Granger & Paquot, 2017; Paquot et al., 2024).

- **Task design and elicitation methods**, including age-appropriate, engaging, or multimodal tasks (Cameron, 2001; Pinter, 2017; Ellis, 2003).

- **Annotation challenges** (e.g., handling non-target-like or emergent language, multimodal learner output, interlanguage features, discourse-pragmatic annotation) (Lüdeling & Hirschmann, 2015; MacWhinney, 2000; Werner, 2017).

- **Analytical approaches and reflections**, such as:

  o Statistical and computational techniques suited for unbalanced or sparse data (Gries, 2015; Alexopoulou et al., 2017).

  o Frameworks for modelling developmental trajectories (Biber et al., 2020; Housen & Kuiken, 2009; Pallotti, 2020).

- **Methodological triangulation**, including integration of learner corpora with questionnaires, observations, eye-tracking, keystroke logging, or psycholinguistic experiments (Meunier & Littré 2013; Marsden et al., 2016).

- **Replicability and transparency** in studies with young learners (Marsden et al., 2016; Paquot & Plonsky, 2017).

- **Data management and ethics**, including consent procedures, anonymization, and working with educational administrators and institutions

- **Technology-enhanced approaches**, including digital recording environments, automatic annotation tools, as well as NLP applications for child/learner language (Wittenburg et al., 2006).

The workshop will feature a keynote by

Prof. Emma Marsden, University of York

Prof. Walt Detmar Meurers, Leibniz-Institut für Wissensmedien, Tübingen

The workshop will take place jointly with the [Fifteenth Bonn Applied English Linguistics Conference (BAELc15)](), which will focus on corpus-based research but is open to other fields of applied linguistics as well. While the working language of the event is English, we welcome contributions on all learner and target languages. The conference is planned as an in-person event. It will start after 12 pm on Thursday and end (at the latest) at 4 pm on Saturday, leaving room for travel.

All talks will be held on the ground floor of the **IMPULSE – House for Intellectual Innovation and Creativity, Adenauerallee 131, 53113 Bonn.**

Please submit your abstracts (in the range of 400–500 words + potentially a data table or figure for illustration + references; please use APA style) before April 15th, 2026 via [easyabs](). You will receive feedback on acceptance in early May 2026. We will be able to accommodate a limited number of online presentations. Please indicate your availability in your submission.

Questions on the conference should be directed to [bael@uni-bonn.de]().

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